

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 TRSE-00 AID-05 /064 W

-----093628 120010Z /62

R 110900Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3336

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBADNY DACCA

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PK, IN, PINT

SUBJECT: MFA COMMENTS ON REPATRIATION OF DETAINEES

REF: NEW DELHI 11230

1. AUGUST 10 PRESS FEATURES FRONT-PAGE ARTICLES QUOTING FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN, IN RESPONSE TO "ITEMS IN PAKISTANI NEWSPAPERS AND OFFICIAL STATEMENT IN HEDIAN PARLRIMENT", THAT GOP IS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO HASTEN THE PROCESS OF REPATRIATION OF INDIAN DETENUS IN PAKISTAN. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT INDIA WOULD COOPERATE IN EFFORTS TO ALLOW THOSE HELD IN BOTH COUNTRIES TO RETURN HOME. STATEMENT GAVE OBJECTIVE OUTLINE OF PRISONER EXCHANGE EFFORTS SINCE 1974, AND NOTED THAT GOP REGARDED ISSUE OF INDIAN DETENUS IN PAKISTAN AS A "HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM".

2. ARTICLE ALSO STATES THAT 139 PAKISTANIS HAVE BEEN

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RECENTLY RELEASED UNILATERALLY BY INDIA AND ARRANGEMENTS TO REPATRIATE 200 INDIAN DETAINED IN PAKISTAN ARE BEING MADE. SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT GOP HAS INFORMED DELHI THAT NO INDIAN MILITARY OFFICERS ARE AMONG THOSE HELD.

3. ONLY NEWS ITEM WE HAVE FOUND IS AUGUST 3 NAW-I-WAQT EDITORIAL ENTITLED "PAKISTANI PRISONERS IN INDIAN

JAIL," WHICH CITES LETTER FROM STUDENT WHO, ALONG WITH "42 PAKISTANI PRISONERS FROM DECEMBER 1971 WAR", WAS BEING HELD IN JAMMU JAIL. ACCORDING TO THIS LETTER "HUNDREDS OF PAKISTANIS WERE LANGUISHING IN VARIOUS JAILS IN INDIAN PUNJAB, HARIYANA AND RAJASTHAN". THE EDITORIAL CALLED UPON GOI LEADERS TO DISPLAY THEIR GOODWILL AND RELEASE THE PAKISTANI DETAINEES.

4. INDIAN EMBASSY POLCOUNS, IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, SAID HE THOUGHT AUGUST 10 ARTICLES GAVT "BALANCED VIEW" OF PROBLEM AND THAT REPATRIATIONS WOULD CONTINUE "APACE." ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN NAWA-I-WAQT EDITORIAL, HE CASUALLY DISMISSED CLAIM THAT "HUNDREDS OF PAKISTANIS" WERE BEING DETAINED AND CITED RECENT UNILATERAL RELEASE BY GOI OF 200 (SIC) PAKISTANIS. INDIAN POLCOUNS THEN REMARKED IMU HAD INFORMATION THAT APPROXIMATELY 165 INDIANS, SOME OF WHOM ARE INDIAN MILITARY OFFICERS, WERE IN PAKISTANI JAILS, AND GOI EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER HAD RECENTLY TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT GOI WAS MAKING ALL EFFORTS TO SECURE THEIR RELEASE.

5. ON GENERAL INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS, INDIAN POLCOUNS, ECHOING VIEW EXPRESSED TO EMBASSY DELHI (REFTEL), SAID THAT GOI IS TAKING "WAIT AND SEE APPROACH" AND THAT POLITICAL CRISIS IN PAKISTAN WAS "STRICTLY AN INTERNAL AFFAIR". WHILE IN PAST GOI HAS HAD PROBLEMS WITH MILITARY REGIMES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN PAKISTAN, MLA APPEARED TO BE DIFFERENT FROM PAST "MILITARY REGIMES", AND THAT GOI "FELT MORE COMFORTABLE" WITH MLA'S ATTEMPT TO ENSURE PAKISTAN'S RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT.

6. COMMENT: REGARDLESS OF THE DISPARITY IN NUMBERS AND THE DISAGREEMENT OVER WHETHER ANY INDIAN MILITARY OFFICERS ARE HELD IN PAKISTAN, IT IS EVIDENT BOTH GOVERNMENTS WANT TO TREAT THE REPATRIATION ISSUE IN A NON-POLITICAL AND LOW-KEY MANNER. MFA WAS CONSTRAINED TO ISSUE STATEMENT IN VIEW OF NAWA-I-WAQT EDITORIAL, BUT TOOK CONCILIATORY AND POSITIVE LINE. TREATMENT OF THIS SUBJECT REFLECTS INTERIM GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF NOT ROCKING THE BOAT IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS, AND EVEN SAYING A FEW NICE WORDS ABOUT WHAT THEY SEE AS DELHI'S CURRENT POLICY OF RESTRAINT AND MODERATION TOWARD PAKISTAN. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPATRIATION, PRESS COMMENTS, AGREEMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA08225
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770290-0468
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770872/aaaacjht.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4410a45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NEW DELHI 11230
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1635466
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MFA COMMENTS ON REPATRIATION OF DETAINEES
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, PK, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4410a45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009